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**The General Outlook.**

Brethren occasionally write to us, inquiring what the general outlook for the Brethren Cause is. These inquiries we always answer in bright colors.

As we have said before, a little success satisfies us, and we are thankful; and for greater success, we are thankful in proportion; therefore, we have nothing but encouraging words to write regarding the outlook for the Brethren Church, and shall have no other so long as the good work is going on.

Last week more than a hundred conversions were reported from the field, and several more are reported this week. The messages from the field for each issue of the paper inform us that the Lord's work is prospering, and that great interest in saving the lost is being taken in all localities where there are members of our church.

The growth of an interest of such character bespeaks the accomplishment of a glorious labor for the Lord. The interest for the discussion of old doctrinal subjects is no longer entertaining to many of our people, and the food that satisfies their literary appetites is the reports from the revival field, and it is devoured with a relish that is truly pleasing. This shows to the observer that mission work has a powerful support in the sentiments of our people, and whatever virtue is thus rooted, will bear fruit in due season; in the way of "substantial encouragement"—money for the work, if you please.

During the past year, several hundred accessions have taken stands in our ranks, and among that number, we can not now call to remembrance one, who has manifested a disposition to engage in religious contention rather than serve the Lord in persuading sinners to repent; but there are many whom we now remember, who have shown great zeal in spreading the truth that gave consolation to their own souls, and helping others to lay hold upon eternal life. This is the lively hope of the Brethren cause and it is encouraging. We believe that ere long the differences about exclusiveness and liberality will be looked upon as contentions about words to no profit, and that the energies that are thus wasted will be applied upon the one, only and all-important work of redeeming the lost, and teaching them the purest, most simple and broadest religious discipline there is in all the world. We shall even become more strenuous in Christian

doctrine and in holding to the Gospel ordinances than we are now, after they are thoroughly cleansed of all stramineous doctrines in our mental conceptions of them, and our godly liberality will extend until it becomes the broadest there is to be found anywhere below the throne of God, because we can afford to be so. But no one needs to accept this prophecy unless he is pleased with it.

May God give us more grace, virtue and strength to carry forward this holy cause.

**Tendency and Religious History.**

No doubt the brethren who felt it prudent to criticize the statement made by us which is reviewed by brother White, in an article this week, have discovered that we were misunderstood. Our brother's remarks prove what we claim. He asserts that the Roman Catholic Church is more liberal than it formerly was, because it had to be. This statement is a historical truth, and shows that this Communion became more liberal because it was powerless to be otherwise, rather than the result of its own tendency.

The way to satisfy our minds on this point is to assign to each religious denomination absolute and complete temporal and ecclesiastical power, and then judge as to the probable course taken by each one, and then you will have an index to tendency.

A man might be possessed with a tendency to commit murder, but if he is kept securely behind iron bars and out of reach of all living things what proof would you have to establish the fact? He simply had to keep from murdering.

Place into the hands of the Methodist church the complete control of the Government of the United States, with its ecclesiastical power, and then you will see what the tendency would be. Do the same thing with other churches and what would you have? more liberty or less, which?

The lesson to be found in the history of the Puritan fathers may be studied and remembered. They left their native land and came to the shores of America, at a mighty risk, that they might be undisturbed in their chosen manner of worshiping the true God. No sooner were they landed, than the tendency in their hearts began to lead and the ultimate result was the inhuman and ungodly Blue Laws, which are notorious wherever American history is known and read. Here there was room for absolute freedom, and the tendency of the people is shown. But those laws, like all others of like character, have left their stain and now there is more liberality in the places where they once were the criterion of judges; not because there was a tendency in the hearts of religious leaders in the contrary direction, but because there had to be. Undue severity in one direction almost always creates a revolt in the opposite. The exclusiveness and the rigor of the Puritans made reason and freedom of thought her enemy, and now religion is in a deplorable condition in the New England states, and infidelity is king.

The mission of the righteous man in this world is to do all the good he can; and good is of

such a character that it does not matter how it is done so long as the means used is honorably obtained, and no act is performed that makes of non-effect the ordinances of the gospel and the commands of Jesus Christ. Therefore the tendency to strenuousness in the attitude toward the ordinances of the church should not be allowed to lead men into the prevalent error of enforcing them by decrees of councils and threatened anathemas, or by the use of force.

There are many evils in the world, and a few good people are rooted in the same soil that some evil people are, and when it is decided to pull up the weeds, care should be exercised that the useful plants are not rooted out too.

But sound doctrine dressed in speech that can not be condemned is the effective power in propagating Christianity; and the gospel preacher should wade into the stream of sin as far as he can safely to rescue the fallen. The man who only sits in a fine parsonage, and preaches in an elegant pulpit, is an awful poor laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. He only looks after the ordinances of his church, while he leaves the habits and practical Christian lives of his people to be directed by the powers of Satan largely.

**OUR POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT.**

This exchange of views has grown out of a thought expressed in a private letter from a brother. He said that he thought the time had come when the Brethren church had reached that point where it must follow in the groove of the popular churches or make the opposite choice. This, we correctly or incorrectly understood to mean, that we were in danger of abandoning our firm convictions that the Gospel was a proper Christian Discipline, that it does not matter whether baptism is performed by sprinkling or immersion, that a meal is unscriptural as a part of the Lord's Supper, etc.

Now we understand that trine immersion is a rule established by authority in the Brethren Church, as well as some of our other practices, and they are therefore, to us, religious ordinances; and they are also gospel ordinances, we believe. Hence, we meant to say that in history we find that the tendency has been to become more strenuous in the attitude toward religious ordinances—those rites and ceremonies made the distinct features by authority, whatever they may be. So our tendency, should be, according to this rule, to cling to trine immersion.

In discussing a proposition such as "Religious Ordinances a Bar to Liberality," then our religious ordinances are to us no more, that the religious ordinances of the Mohammedan are to him. So his tendency with respect to his religious ordinances is in some direction, and so our tendencies with respect to our ordinances are in some direction.

The Methodist church, unless we are in error, never made trine immersion, the holy Supper or foot-washing, a rule established by authority, a permanent rule of action; a church statute, law, edict, or decree.

With this church they are not

\* Strenuousness is an excellent quality, and any man should be proud of it, if it is exercised in a holy cause. But in religion, when it leads too far, then there is persecution and oppression.

established rites and ceremonies, therefore they are not religious ordinances to them. But they cannot deny that they are religious ordinances; neither can we assert that the forms and ceremonies of the Mohammedan are not religious ordinances, yet no one claims that they are Christian or gospel ordinances.

We anticipated that brethren might mistake the purpose of the title we used with the article that has occasioned this explanation, and, therefore, said it did not properly forecast the nature of what followed. In discussing a proposition as to what the tendency of the world has been in its relation to the ordinances of the gospel, we would arrive at a destination that the loyal member of the Brethren Church would have no occasion to criticize, and to declare a historical blunder.

**EDITORIAL ITEMS.**

If we recognize nobility in another, it is an evidence that the best within ourselves is not yet dead. If we are convinced that truth and faith and purity have died out of the world, it is a sure sign that we are sadly in need of reformation ourselves.

Bro. Z. T. Livingood reports one more accession to the Bethlehem church, near Lanark, Ill.

Bro. P. J. Brown is now at Lexington, in the Miami Valley, conducting a revival meeting, and Bro. J. H. Worst is at Bear Creek.

Many bad habits that we got into in our days of indiscretion cling very tenaciously to us. We sometimes despair of ever conquering them. But we should struggle and fight on, and not become too easily discouraged. We should adopt the wisdom of the boy with a small shovel before a large snowbank. When asked how he expected to get through it, he replied, "By keeping at it, that's how."

We would say to sister Rittenhouse, that we could easily take a notion to learn more about the South, and would delight to travel around and preach for isolated members. But we already have too many irons in the fire, and they need more attention than we can give them.

Bro. B. G. Frederick writes that it is now raining in California, and that means good crops if it continues long enough. He lives at Ripon.

The beautiful, white, spotless keys of a piano are soulless and soundless in themselves, but it is the poor, homely-looking wire, out of sight, that brings out the beautiful harmony that reaches and charms the soul.

Great minds look out into the wide world, think broadly, act nobly. Little minds turn their eyes inwardly, and can see nothing beyond their own possessions and likings.

Bro. John Dubbs informs the EVANGELIST readers that the Milford church is ready to entertain the visitors to the convention.

Sister Kate Yost, was very low when we heard last from her, but we hope she is better now. It would be a satisfaction to hear from some one regarding her condition. May she be remembered in our prayers, brethren.

The Certificates of baptism are something new. Send for a few and see whether they will not please you.

The members of the Falls City church, in Nebraska, has reason to be much encouraged. An addition of forty-one members, as the result of one meeting must have an animating effect.

**Falls City Items.**

Our meetings in the Silver Creek meeting house closed on Wednesday evening, Feb. 23rd, having continued over three weeks. During this time brother Nicholson preached every evening and also a few times in day time, but owing to the bad condition of the roads and the inclemency of the weather it was thought best to have only one

meeting each day. The spirit of the Lord worked with us in these meetings from their beginning and their results prove that the gospel when preached independent of the traditions and the commandments of men will have its effect in its saving efficacy.

Elder Nicholson has grown old in years in the service of the Master, and he is one of the few men of his age who from the beginning of his ministry has confined himself to the preaching of the gospel only and did not need to revise his creed when the Brethren church shook off its incubus of mandatory legislation. In other words Bro. Nicholson has always been a "progressive" and has maintained his integrity amidst all the trials and persecutions that he was subjected to during the apostasy.

The church here has been much encouraged during these meetings and our members have been increased by forty-one additions, counting those who are baptized and the applicants awaiting baptism with those who have joined by relation.

From here Bro. Nicholson goes to Gage and Thayer counties, Neb., in which trip he is accompanied by Eld. Stump.

These two Elders are possessed with the scriptural qualification for good evangelists and are well qualified for the accomplishment of such a work.

It was thought best to postpone the love feast until later, when the roads and weather will likely be better. We believe that others are very near the kingdom, and we have hopes that the good work will continue.  
E. L. Y.

**A Quandary.**

Just now I am in a state of difficulty, doubt, or uncertainty. If "a religious ordinance is an established rite or ceremony," and "may be gospel or anti-gospel," if "liberality" has "two very full definitions," one according with good or right and the other with evil and wrong; and if a good brother may use these terms without saying in what sense he is using them, then, truly, he may say what he pleases and maintain his position. I am sorry that I undertook to handle what proves to be "a speckled trout in the country and a codfish in town; but I still hold that the views presented in my article headed, "What is Liberality?" are in accordance with truth and reason. I am willing to admit that I am "in a very peculiar position"; for whichever horn of the four-horned animal I take hold of, it will surely gore me with one of the others. I am in the condition the man was in who had caught a young wildcat, and had to call on his little son to help him "let the thing go." I am tired; I want rest, and I promise you to try to be more careful in the future, and not undertake to refute a statement that means nothing in particular and very little in general.

We are getting along pleasantly at Lanark, but are likely to have an interesting time about next week, as Eld. Fornbrook, of the church of God (?), is making an attack on trine immersion. His subject is, "Single Immersion vs. Trine Immersion." We will try to hear him and help him, and then we will tell you more about it.

J. W. BEER.

Lanark, Ill., Feb. 24th, 1887.